



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*
MELISSA WOODS, *PLANNER*

MEMBERS PRESENT

MATTHEW RICE, *CHAIR*
DEBORAH FENNICK
JAMES KIRYLO
TANYA PAGLIA
SARAH RADDING

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, September 25, 2014, at 6:30 p.m.** in City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

The purpose of the meeting was to review and make recommendations on the following proposals:

771 McGrath

Description: The developer team presented the project on the east side of the Stop and Shop site. The project will have first floor parking, entrances at the corners, and 2 courtyards for residents on Level 2. The project will have two frontages, the Stop and Shop parking lot and a pedestrian frontage on Cross Street. Cross Street will be permanently closed and be improved upon with a passive park. The Cross Street and South elevation was designed to mimic the triple decker context in East Somerville. The north and Stop & Shop elevation were designed to resemble an apartment building.



The DRC made the following recommendations on the design.

- The screening of the courtyard is necessary but needs a more thoughtful execution. The focus should be on the courtyard experience. The screen presented needs articulation. It is also a great opportunity for art.
- The first floor is almost entirely parking but looks residential in the window form – it will be dark at night.
- Address the sides of the building as if they are the side.
- The quality of the fiber cement panels in large cuts tends to be wavy and will lessen the quality of the building. Consider alternate materials.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and proceed to the Planning Board with the standard condition that materials shall be review by the DRC.

620 Broadway

Description: The Architect presented the project on behalf of the development team. The project is a mixed use building with a first floor commercial spaces totaling +/- 1,200 square feet and 11 residential units averaging 1,850 square feet. There are 20 at-grade parking spaces. The materials include a precast base, metal panels, metal siding, and composite trim.



The DRC made the following recommendations on the design.

- The logistics of servicing the retail areas need to be considered. Trash, deliveries, etc.
- The balconies are tinted glass – they need some privacy since they are on a main street.
- The massing of the building is starting to work. However, the materials are stark. White and shiny doesn't always equal good and the materials are a 'near miss' meaning that that almost match but don't. The project needs to fit into the Somerville vernacular. The square grid block towers are jarring. The materials need to be more subdued. The jointing pattern needs to be reconsidered.
- Green roofs would be a great addition.
- The wing wall at the residential entrance is too deep.
- A developed landscape plan is necessary especially since the Applicant is proposing planting in the front of the building. These will be need to be hardy plants. Planting beds should be considered.
- The awning looks awkward in the rendering, it needs something to attach to besides a cornice.
- Bike parking needs to be incorporated into the plan.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and present at the next DRC meeting on October 23, 2014.

ASQ Block 11 (Partners)

Description: The Applicant presented the garage as well as other site and architectural developments since the Planning Board approval. The garage has gone from a 4 bay to 3 bay garage (long and narrow). It is a precast concrete garage with aluminum fins and a dark spandrel panel in the recessed areas. There will be a metal mesh at the first floor on the multiuse path side for security.

The DRC made the following recommendations on the design.

- The garage has been improved since the permit set.
- The reality of the long stretch at the path between the building and garage was not portrayed in the rendering. The final design needs to possibly play with lighting or include signage to break of the tremendously long stretch.
- The horizontal bands will be better as metal to match the fins with the precast being the frame.
- The fins are readying, they're too unsubstantial.
- The slab edge should be metal panel.
- The design of the garage should take more cues from the office building.
- The 11' floor to floor height will not be able to be filled as parking is underutilized as suggested.
- A play area that isn't necessarily play equipment should be added to the park to activate the site.
- The entrance is subdued enough that first time visitors may not know where to enter.

47 Hunting

Description: Materials and front entrance review of the previously approved project. The materials presented were a brick base, Hardie plank in Monterey Taupe, and ivory trim. The balcony railing has been changed to airplane cable. There will be a PVC fence.

The DRC made the following recommendations on the design.

- The revised front entrance has improved.
- The Hardie plank should be smooth.
- The metal mesh that screens the garage is not working. A revised material should be proposed that includes a horizontal grain (to coordinate with the horizontal airplane cable) and be either a brushed metal or a different metal with darker tones. The metal should not be painted black.

82 Highland

Description: The materials presented were the Boothbank Blue Hardi composite siding, Boral composite trim, a Hatteras shingles, and Jeld-Wen aluminum clad windows in black.

The DRC made the following recommendations on the design.

- The Hardie plank should be smooth.

90 Washington Street

Description: The architects presented materials of the previously approved project. The materials on the Washington Street elevation include aluminum composite panel, Hardie fiber cement panel, seam metal siding, and Nichiha wood grain fiber cement panels. The east elevation materials include red brick (with a grey mortar), and aluminum composite panel. The rear elevation will be Hardie Artisan in a dark brown, Hardie panel in a bright green, and aluminum composite panel. White vinyl windows throughout.

The DRC made the following recommendations on the design.

- The green is very vivid. Some members were inclined to the green on the DiMella Shaffer logo instead.
- The Nichiha wood grain fiber cement panels look fake. Resin panel was originally proposed but is too expensive. Real wood is a valid alternative.